

VAW-77 Command Operations Report

1. Command Data

- a. Name of Command: **Airborne Early Warning Squadron SEVEN SEVEN (VAW-77)**
- b. UIC: **55651**
- c. Commanding Officer: **Cassetta, Stephen T. CDR, USN**
- d. Date Assumed Command: **2006-06-12**
- e. Mission/Command Employment/Area of Operations: **Counter-Narco-Terrorism and Homeland Defense/CENTAM, SOUTHAM, CONUS**
- f. Permanent Location: **NAS Atlanta, GA**
- g. ISIC: **Commander, Carrier Air Wing Reserve TWO ZERO**
- h. Task Force: **Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South (JIATF-S)**
- i. Type and number of aircraft assigned: **E-2C Hawkeye Group II/NP2K/NU**

| <u>Side Number</u> | <u>BUNO</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 600 | 163850 |
| 601 | 164353 |
| 602 | 163696 |
| 603 | 163695 |
| 604 | 164485 |
| 605 | 164487 |
| 606 | 164493 |
| 607 | 164486 |

- j. Number of personnel assigned:

Officers: **52**
Enlisted: **35**
Civilians: **58**

- k. Command Point of Contact:

LCDR (b) (6)
Administration Officer

(b) (6)

1000 Halsey Avenue, Hangar 5
NAS Atlanta
Marietta, GA 30060

2. Commander's Assessment

The primary mission of Airborne Early Warning Squadron SEVEN SEVEN (VAW-77) is to provide Airborne Command, Control & Coordination (ABC₃) of our nation's Counter Narco-Terrorism forces in the global war on illegal drugs and terrorism. Nicknamed the "Night Wolves", VAW-77 is one of seven squadrons assigned to Atlanta based Carrier Air Wing TWO ZERO. The squadron was established in October, 1995 as one of two Navy Reserve Hawkeye Squadrons, and since the 2005 decommission of sister unit, VAW-78, remains the nation's sole expeditionary E-2C squadron.

The Night Wolves have consistently deployed in excess of 180 days per year to Forward Operating Locations (FOL's) throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean including Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Panama, Ecuador, Cayman and Curacao. In addition, the squadron enhances Navy fleet personnel training and readiness through dedicated participation in ARI (Active/Reserve Integration) as well as deploying in consistent support of combined DOD operations throughout CONUS. VAW-77 personnel are currently involved as Individual Augmentations to Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and stand ready to participate in Homeland Defense Missions, NASA Space Shuttle launch range control and humanitarian aid and natural disaster relief such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, during which the Night Wolves were the first DOD Command and Control assets on-scene, facilitating over 1800 rescues and earning the Humanitarian Service Award.

VAW-77 is composed of approximately 100 highly motivated Full Time Support (FTS) and selected Reservist (SELRES) officers and enlisted whose Navy backgrounds generally include fleet service in either the Hawkeye or C-2 Greyhound (Carrier Onboard Delivery) communities. While the FTS are all Atlanta residents, SELRES compose approximately 60% of this manpower (including both the CO and XO) who hail geographically from all corners of the country. Their civilian professional lives are as varied as their home addresses and range from airline pilots to corporate lawyers to engineering consultants. Rounding out this extremely seasoned and talented squadron is a unique contingent of highly competent and experienced Northrop Grumman contract maintenance professionals. Like the Navy personnel, their experience includes years of combined service to the fleet.

3. Chronology and Narrative

Operations:

- a. 10JAN06 – 23FEB06 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, FOL Comalapa, El Salvador

- b. 03APR06 – 09MAY06 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, FOL Comalapa, El Salvador
- c. 15MAY06 – 18MAY06 CVWR-20 Missile Exercise, NAS New Orleans, LA
- d. 10JUL06 – 31AUG06 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, FOL Manta, Ecuador
- e. 03OCT06 – 18NOV06 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, FOL Curacao, N.A.

Narrative:

VAW-77 flew 739 sorties for a total of 2288 mishap free flight hours in CY2006. In addition to its primary mission of Counter Narco-terrorism, it also provided support to air wing exercises and fleet aircrew training.

In 2006, VAW-77 continued its string of success, contributing to the capture of 4 vessels and 17 Narco-terrorists, and the seizure of over 36,000 pounds of cocaine with an estimated street value of over \$1.88B. This brings the impressive tally of drugs seized in the AOR to over 103,000 pounds with an estimated street value in excess of \$5.16B since 2003! These interdictions included the arrest of 64 Narco-terrorists, 15 go-fast and logistical support vessels and 11 aircraft.

On November 20, 2006, the Honorable John Walters, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and U.S. Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-Marietta, GA), paid a visit to VAW-77 in order to formally recognize the squadron's success on behalf of the President. Mr. Walters presented the command with the Director's Award for Distinguished Service.

Since its establishment, VAW-77 has received the following awards: Humanitarian Service Award, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation, Noel Davis Battle "E" (3 awards), Naval Aviation Safety "S" (6 awards), and "Golden Wrench" (CAG Maintenance Excellence Award).